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The President's Daily Brief

September 3, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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USSR

Analysis of activity at the Severodvinsk shipyard for the first half of 1975 suggests that the Soviets are building a new submarine, possibly equipped to fire ballistic missiles. It is also possible, however, that the construction activity there is related to the maintenance and overhaul of nuclear submarines presently in service.

Early this year, what appeared to be three pressure hull sections were photographed at Severodvinsk outside a construction hall that builds hull sections for ballistic-missile submarines. The sections were encased in box-like structures [redacted]

[redacted] With the addition of an outer hull--a standard design for Soviet submarines--the new submarine could have a beam of about 43 feet, making it about 5 feet wider than other modern Soviet ballistic-missile submarines.

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Sometime between late June and July 22, the hull sections disappeared. We believe they were moved across the shipyard into a new large construction hall for submarines by means of a transporter specifically built to move the sections. If the submarine follows the pattern for the construction of ballistic-missile submarines, it probably will be ready for launching in 1978 and could enter the force by 1980.

Soviet officials have hinted for some time--usually in connection with attempts in SALT to restrict the US Trident program--that they are developing an advanced SSBN. General Secretary Brezhnev recently told a visiting group of US Senators that the USSR would not build its new submarine, called the Typhoon, if the US agreed not to build the Trident. A submarine of this size, carrying a long-range missile with MIRVs, could be considered by the Soviets to be comparable to our Trident, which will not be operational until late 1978 or 1979.

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PORTUGAL

Portuguese officers opposed to pro-Communist former prime minister Vasco Goncalves are stepping up efforts to remove him as armed forces chief of staff. Their efforts, plus parallel moves by the political parties, have led to a postponement in swearing in a new government with Admiral Azevedo as prime minister.

Army Chief of Staff Fabiao and his air force counterpart, General Moraes da Silva, have publicly denounced Goncalves. Each has called on the separate assembly of his service to purge Goncalves' supporters before a scheduled meeting on Friday of the Armed Forces General Assembly.

The general assembly, which is made up of 240 officers and enlisted men and has generally followed a pro-Goncalves line, has been called into session by President Costa Gomes to revamp the Revolutionary Council. The army holds 120 seats in the assembly and the air force 60. The remaining 60 seats are controlled by the navy, which earlier endorsed Goncalves' bid to remain prime minister.

It has been widely assumed that the general assembly will be used to purge the leaders of the anti-Goncalves faction. If the army and air force succeed in packing their delegations, however, they could turn the assembly into an effective weapon against Goncalves.

Goncalves and his Communist supporters are clearly worried about the strategy of the anti-Communist Antunes group. This strategy is designed to show that Goncalves cannot control the armed forces and to use the assembly against him.

Air force chief Moraes da Silva was summoned to the presidential palace to explain his refusal to support Goncalves in his new post. His refusal was also criticized by the government-controlled and Communist-influenced national radio, in what may be the opening volley of a Communist propaganda offensive.

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ECUADOR

President Rodriguez has restored calm to Quito following Monday's abortive coup, but dealing with the underlying causes of discontent--particularly the country's economic problems--will be a more difficult matter.

The attempted coup could set back, at least temporarily, recent moves by the government to shift its policy orientation away from the left and toward the center. Rodriguez has accused "irresponsible politicians" of instigating the rebellion; this may signal a crackdown on conservative political and business groups as well as on a critical press.

Leading civilian critics of the regime already have gone into hiding, while some 80 soldiers and officers have been placed under arrest. Press reports indicate that government forces have raided the homes of some political and business leaders, and a dusk-to-dawn curfew is in effect in Quito and Guayaquil.

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NOTE

Cuba is currently engaged in a major propaganda campaign to trumpet the cause of Puerto Rican independence.

One of this drive's high points will be the so-called International Conference on Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence to be held in Havana from September 5 to 7. The Moscow-backed World Peace Council will be the ostensible host, but Cuba has provided the impetus behind the scenes. The Puerto Rican issue lends itself particularly well to international forums such as the UN, where Cuba can beat the drums before a receptive audience of third-world representatives and thus certify its revolutionary and "anti-imperialist" credentials.

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